(a) whether it is a fact that keeping in view the declining productivity of agricultural soil and constant depletion of water in the country National Agriculture Research System (NARS) needs to be revamped;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government has issued any guidelines for reforms in this system during last years; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and when these guidelines were issued?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The ICAR is already addressing these issues through its All India Coordinated Research Projects involving ICAR institutes and State Agricultural Universities located in different agro-ecological regions of the country and has developed site specific nutrient management and ground water recharge measures to tackle such situations. ICAR is also consistently taking up research in frontier areas, to develop cutting-edge technology.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Payment of crop insurance compensation

3252. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the payment of the crop insurance compensation of Kharif 2008 season for an amount of Rs. 356.58 crores is pending with Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC) which collects insurance premium under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) is entrusted with the responsibility to make payment of crop insurance compensation to farmers under the scheme. The financial liability on account of claims (for food & oilseeds crops) over and above 100% of premium and for annual commercial/ horticultural crops above 150% of the premium collected is shared by the Govt. of India and the State Governments in the ratio of 50:50.

Total claims amounting to Rs.1496.22 crore including Central and State Government share of Rs.946.60 crore and Rs.405.65 crore respectively, for Kharif 2008 season and other seasons, under NAIS, are pending for settlement with the AIC.

(c) The Government has provided Rs.250 crore of additionality under the NAIS in the First Supplementary Demands for Grants towards Central Government's share. Further, the Government is committed towards proving adequate resources for this scheme to meet the liabilities on account of claims towards Central Government's share.

Loss of foodgrains production

†3253. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has compiled details with regard to loss occurred to crops in various States due to shortfall in monsoon;

(b) the shortfall of Kharif crops recorded this year as compared to the previous year;

(c) whether Central Government has given those States any package, if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(d) whether Government has any proposal to provide aid for coming crops of Rabi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) Government has estimated/presented State-wise & Crop-wise production loss due to delayed/abnormal monsoon indicate shortfall in area thereby loss in production for kharif, 2009 as per 1st Advance estimates released by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture. The shortfall of kharif, 2009 as compared to kharif, 2008 is given in the Statement (See below).

For increasing rabi production, Government of India conducted rabi conference and video conferences with states to review the issues relating to drought management and preparedness for Rabi crops.

Government of India has taken following strategies to enhance the productivity as well as more area coverage during rabi seasons:

States have been given flexibility to utilize the funds under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Integrated Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) under Macro Management and Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM), age limit norms of certified seed of wheat, rice and pulses varieties have been relaxed. Seed subsidy has been increased for wheat and rice crop from Rs.500/- to Rs. 700/- per quintal, for pulses from Rs. 1200/- to Rs.2000/- per quintal and Jowar and Bajra from Rs.800 to Rs.1000/-per quintal for Rabi 2009-10 season. Additional allocations of rust-resistant and terminal heat-tolerant varieties of wheat minikits have been made Available. Availability and supply of essential inputs such as fertilizers, additional power for irrigation etc. have been ensured in coordination with the States and concern Central Ministries.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.